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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the development of a high school social studies course, Citizenship and World Affairs. Course development involved two forms of reflection: deliberative and personalistic. The author's deliberative reflection, reported in part one of the paper, began as he reviewed research regarding how teachers should foster citizenship skills in their classrooms. The personalistic reflection, reported in part two of the paper, emerged from his deepening understanding of the nature of communication as a result of his practice of the martial art Aikido. Aikido emphasizes blending and joining the movement of an attacker in order to diffuse a violent situation rather than blocking and countering with reciprocal violence. By combining Aikido with civic education, the teacher created a unique social studies elective that taught critical skills for democratic citizenship. Part three of the paper describes the attempt to actually implement the Aikido-as-civics curriculum. Part four of the paper presents implications of this reflective practice, noting that response from students has been very positive. It concludes that providing teachers the opportunity to engage in deliberative and personalistic reflection for the purpose of invigorating their own practice may prove fruitful for both students and teachers. (Contains 57 references.) (SM)

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Bending Back to Move Forward:

Using Reflective Practice to Develop A High School

Civic Education Aikido Course

Paper Presented at:

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Ever since my first encounter with the term reflective practice I have aspired to become a reflective practioner who was more fully aware of what I was teaching, how I was teaching and why. Since being more aware as individuals and as citizens was something I was constantly exhorting my students to do, why should I not do the same as an educator?

In 1997, using principles of reflective practice (Valli, 1997) I began organizing a new social studies elective entitled Citizenship and World Affairs at the high school where I teach. Valli (1997) identified five forms of reflection. I selected two of those, deliberative and personalistic reflection. Deliberative reflection refers to "weighing competing viewpoints and research findings," while personalistic reflection involves "listening to and trusting one's own inner voice" (1997, p.75). My own deliberative reflection, reported in the first part of this paper, began as I reviewed research regarding how teachers should foster citizenship skills in their classrooms. The personalistic reflection, reported in part two, emerged from my deepening understanding of the nature of communication as a result of my practice of the martial art of Aikido. Aikido is a unique martial art that emphasizes blending and joining the movement of an attacker in order to diffuse a violent situation, rather than blocking and countering with reciprocal violence (Saotome, 1993). By combining Aikido with civic education, I was able to create a unique social studies elective that attempted to teach critical skills for democratic citizenship. This attempt to actually implement an Aikido-as-civics-curriculum forms the

focus of part three. All names of students and/or colleagues that are mentioned in part three are pseudonyms to protect anonymity. I end with a summary of possible implications of this reflective practice.

Part One: Deliberative Reflection

In my own classroom I try to create a sense of community that models what our larger communities might be like. Dewey's *Democracy and Education* (1916) has long been a favorite in this regard. Dewey believed that democracy was "more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience" (1916, p.101). This concept of democracy challenges teachers both to teach about the structure of government and to enter the more complex arena of developing the skills that we all require for a communicated experience. Dewey believed that democratic education must challenge each of us "to refer his own action to that of others, and to consider the action of others to give point and direction to his own" (1916, p.101). If we could imagine the impact of our actions on others and their actions on us we might deepen our understanding of the many people who form our community. In this way barriers of race and class and gender might be broken down. As a teacher, this has long been something I have tried to foster in my classroom.

The building of classroom community for the purpose of teaching for democracy is also supported by the work of Cherryholmes (1980). He argued persuasively that individual decision making, long heralded as the goal of civic education is pursued "only in a liberal view of citizenship education" that believes "ongoing, unconstrained, discourse is the heart of social studies" (1980, p 139). Cherryholmes argued that by

encouraging and challenging students to think more carefully and deeply about why things are they way they are, one could foster the kind of critical thinking necessary for democratic citizenship. Dewey's associated living might be built, then, through discourse.

The importance of discourse in the teaching of social studies is also affirmed by Newmann (1992) who defined discourse in the social studies

> as language produced by the students with the intention of providing narrative, argument, explanation, or analysis. To qualify as discourse, these statements must go beyond the literal reproduction of statements previously produced by the teachers, authors of texts...That is, students should produce language in their own unique ways...to serve purposes unique to the tasks of communication in modern times (p.54).

According to Newmann, discourse is important not only because it ensures higher level thinking, but because it "requires reciprocal thinking--which can be seen as a foundation of tolerance. The persistent effort to anticipate the role of the other does more than facilitate communication; it is the essence of moral sensitivity" (1992, p.54). Since we measure a person's understanding of democratic principals by the statements (both oral and written) that people make, "we should look to discourse as the most significant indicator because our ultimate educational objective is discourse itself" (1992, p.59).

The challenge of developing a discourse based curriculum, however, is to ensure discourse does not disintegrate into an exchange of mere opinion where no one is challenged, reason is irrelevant, no prior knowledge or reading is required and disciplined inquiry is nowhere to be seen or heard. It is critical that students and teachers engage in what Newman, Marks and Gamoran (1996) call "authentic intellectual accomplishment"

where students are engaged in (a) construction of knowledge and (b) disciplined inquiry that has (c) value beyond school.

The construction of knowledge was addressed by developing a core question that was the focus of the course: What kind of civic identity will best enable us to respond to contemporary world issues and problems? I did not attempt to transmit a set of data, or simply ask students to "identify the discourse" by "matching authors with their works" (1996, p.282). Rather, I required students to construct their own analysis of the texts and evaluate the relevancy of the texts to their developing understanding of what it means to be a citizen.

Newmann, Marks and Gamoran (1996) state that the second characteristic of authentic intellectual accomplishment, disciplined inquiry,

> consists of three main features: using prior knowledge base from one or more fields, striving for in-depth understanding rather than superficial awareness, and expressing conclusions through elaborated communications (p.283).

As Citizenship and World Affairs (CWA) was a junior and senior level elective, students were challenged to draw upon their prior knowledge of government and history from their year-long Modern World History course in grade ten and their year-long American Studies course in grade 11. The in-depth understanding involved examining ancient writers such as Cicero and Pericles, more recent authors such as Madison and Lincoln and contemporary writers such as James Baldwin (1963), Samuel Huntington (1996), Fareed Zakaria (1997), Yahya Sadowski (1998), Benedict Anderson, bell hooks (1993) and others. Students were encouraged to look for, test, and create relationships "among pieces of knowledge" that "illuminated" our "given problem or issue" (1996, p.283).

Again, our issue was: What kind of civic identity will best enable us to respond to contemporary world issues and problems? I required students to write five essays, give three presentations and engage in weekly seminars using the Socratic Seminar model.

The course culminated in a final essay and public presentation, an "elaborated communication" (Newmann, Marks and Gamoran, 1996). This was the third element of authentic intellectual accomplishment and required students to offer their own analysis of the kind of citizen they needed to be and why. Over the course of two evenings, each student presented a ten-minute summary of his/her essay to a gathering of parents, fellow students and other members of the community at a local coffeehouse. Each student was also required to include a visual representation of his/her thesis as part of the presentation. The *value beyond school* came from a) asking students to define for themselves how they were applying their new understandings of what it means to be a citizen both within the school and beyond it and b) presenting their conclusions to the community. Thus, in my elective class, I was concerned with creating a class that Dewey, Cherryholmes and Newmann, marks and Gamoran would all think was a rigorous example of civic education in action.

I also developed a simulation that would provide the opportunity for students to engage in a deliberation (Parker, 1997). A deliberation is a specific form of discourse that differs, for example, from debate "where people who have already formed their opinions gather to advocate and defend them" (Parker, 1997, p.20). Deliberation is not a question and answer session between teacher and students, but rather a discussion that occurs when people come together to make a decision regarding a course of action the

group must take. Perhaps the best known example of a deliberation occurs when juries decide the guilt or innocence of a defendant. Parker (1997) explains that the

> deliberative arts include a host of skills: listening as well as talking, taking turns, striving to understand points of view different from one's own, criticizing ideas rather than persons, admitting ignorance, slowing the rush to judgement so as to reframe the problem or gather more information, courageously asserting unpopular views, supporting claims with reasoning, drawing analogies and appreciating Voltaire's principal; "'I will disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it" (p.20).

In the deliberation developed for CWA, each student took on the role of an imaginary community member who was part of our high school site-based council. The council had to come to a decision regarding the priorities of the school budget. How much should be spent for what? How do we decide? What are our priorities? Students were challenged to consider the diverse interests that might be situated in their own community.

Thus, by following the process of deliberative reflection I was able to draw upon the recommendations of Dewey (1916), Cherryholmes (1980), Newmann (1992), Newmann, Marks and Gamoran (1996) and Parker (1997, 1998, and 1999) to develop a theoretical framework in which to situate my elective course. Dewey (1916) had provided the concept of associated living. Cherryholmes (1980) had defined the role and importance of discourse in teaching for associated living. Newmann, (1992) and Newmann, Marks and Gamoran (1996) provided further explanation of why discourse was important and how to organize a rigorous course to teach the skills of discourse. Finally, Parker (1997, 1998, 1999) provided focused, curricular suggestions on how to

teach deliberation, a specific kind of discourse. Deliberative reflection helped to deepen my understanding of how and why to teach for democracy.

Part Two: Personalistic Reflection

Personalistic reflection differs from deliberative reflection in its emphasis on listening to "one's own inner voice", rather than "competing viewpoints and research findings" (Valli, p.75). Teachers who engage in personalistic reflection reflect on the kind of person they want to be, how teaching helps them become that person and how they might encourage students to live with compassion and empathy for others. (Valli 1997). My personalistic reflection was sparked by my practice of the martial art of Aikido which was deepening my understanding of communication and affecting the kind of person I wanted to become.

Aikido is unique among martial arts as it teaches practitioners to respond to attacks not by blocking and countering with a strike, but by blending and joining the movement of another so that together both individuals may reach a position of mutual safety (Saotome, 1993; Gleason, 1995; Stevens, 1997). The very first time I attended an Aikido class the connections to civic education were startling. In organizing my personalistic reflections for this paper (presented below in a different font), I drew from the Journal I kept during fall semester 2000. Also, to recapture what I felt during my first Aikido class in 1995, I employed what Ellis and Bochner (1999) define as "systematic sociological introspection and emotional recall (p.737)". In other words, I sat down and tried to carefully reconstruct exactly what happened that first night in an Aikido dojo, what I saw, and the meaning I attached to that experience.

Aikido, October 1995

My first night in an Aikido dojo. I am kneeling in seiza position - a position not normal to 35-year-old American males. I am watching an extraordinary woman spin and merge with an attacker. No one is injured. She does not counter a punch with a kick or another punch. Instead, she blends with the direction of the strikes and punches, turns, and throws the person in a way that enables the aggressor to land safely. I get it - I am seeing the resolution of conflict in a mutually respectful, beautiful manner.

In my class I try to help students learn how to use language that enables them to disagree respectfully. Here, I am seeing the physical practice of that very same idea. What I am seeing is the physical practice of conflict resolution that matches what I am trying to do in my class. This I need to study.

Aikido was developed to specifically and explicitly be a martial art of peace (Saotome, 1993). As I began to train, and read about how other Aikido practitioners were using this art of peace in various arenas beyond the dojo, I wondered what would happen if students were introduced to some of the basic Aikido teachings in conjunction with the kind of citizenship education researchers were saying should happen in my classroom. Would students' discourse skills be improved? Would practicing physical discourse designed to resolve conflict help develop skills of democratic discourse Cherryholmes, Newman and Parker had in mind, citizenship skills that have great value beyond school? The use of Aikido in leadership development (Mindell, 1993), communication skills (Parry, 1991), Brief Strategic Therapy (Saposnek, 1980) and school based violence prevention (Edelman, 1994) helped me to theorize why my own application to civic

education might work. All of these applications of Aikido involved using principles of Aikido to teach communication skills.

The work of Donald Levine (1989, 1990), Professor of Sociology at the University of Chicago and a black belt in Aikido, was also very important in conceptualizing how to combine the practice of a martial art such as Aikido with the liberal art of civic education. In *The Liberal Arts and The Martial Arts* (1989) and *Martial Arts as a Resource for Liberal Education--The Case of Aikido* (1990), Levine made three key links between the liberal and martial arts.

Levine posited that in the West, the distinction between utilitarian and liberal arts is derived from Aristotle's claim that one can distinguish between knowledge that is "of a servile sort from the kind of knowledge that is worthy of free men (eleuthron)" (1990, p.175). Levine argued that just as education has been used in the West to teach both servile knowledge and knowledge worthy of free men, so the martial arts have been used to teach both physical skills of self-defense and the development of moral character. Levine argued that

> the distinction embodied in the Japanese contrast between bujutsu and budo parallels an age-old Western distinction between strictly utilitarian arts and arts that posses a liberal character (1990, p.173).

Bujutsu refers to the fighting skills learned from studying a martial art. Yet, these skills are also employed to cultivate a student's moral, mental and spiritual powers referred to as budo. The founder of Aikido, Morehei Ueshiba, specifically stated that he had developed Aikido as a method of study of the highest form of Budo, not bujutsu. (Stevens, 1997).

The second connection Levine posited is between the Greek ideal of arete, "the notion of using culture as a means to create a higher type of human being...through cultivating powers of the body" (1990, p.174), and the Japanese concept of budo shared by many Asian cultures. In the West, the cultivation of the body, once held in such great regard by the Greeks, was forgotten as the intellectual arts became the quadrivium in the Middle Ages and, ultimately, liberal arts in our modern era. Levine traces the development of the concept of budo through Confucian thought, Shaolin Temple Boxing, Taoist inspired forms of tai chi chuan, samurai training in the Tokugawa Shogunate of Japan, up to the present day. Levine's key point here is that both the East and the West have historical antecedents for combining intellectual and physical training for the purpose of moral and cultural teachings.

Levine's third point is to identify "what is liberal about liberal education" (1989, p.309), and then suggest how the study of martial arts can be considered the study of a liberal art in the Western sense. Students who study the martial arts for many years invariably state that while they may have begun their study for the purpose of learning self-defense, ultimately the study becomes a quest to master the art itself.

> What emerges is the sense of a lifelong quest for perfection, wherein each moment is intrinsically satisfying, but the experience is framed as a part of an unlimited pursuit of growth and improved expression. One is reminded of what John Dewey wrote concerning the fine arts: that the works of the fine arts are not merely ends in themselves which give satisfaction, but their creation and contemplation whet the appetite for new effort and achievement and thus bring continuously expanding satisfaction (Levine, 1989, p. 309).

In other words, the study of a martial art can be presented as learning that is undertaken for its own sake, for promoting happiness and the good life. Certainly, there are health benefits and self-defense benefits from studying a martial art just as there are practical benefits from learning how to read so that one might read a telephone book, or a computer manual. Yet liberal education encourages reading for the cultivation of individuals. In this way a liberal education can foster the kind of empathy Newmann (1992) spoke about as being so important for democracy. A martial art may be studied simply for the purpose of learning how to defend oneself or for the higher purpose of self-refinement and personal development.

There are also intriguing corollaries between the list of specific "deliberative arts" posited by Parker (1997) as important skills for civic education and the skills one can develop in an Aikido dojo. In an Aikido encounter one "listens" to the energy, or attack, of a partner by physically feeling the intent of the aggressor. In what direction does he/she want to go? If a punch is aimed right at my midsection, then I have to move in such a way that I connect and blend with that direction. If someone attacks from the side I must move in an entirely different direction. A powerful strike requires a different response than a soft strike. A fast strike requires a different response than a slow strike. Thus, one must listen intently to determine how to respond.

This physical listening is akin to what occurs when we engage in written or oral discourse with others. In classroom discourse we must not only make ourselves clear, but engage in "persistent effort to anticipate the role of the other" which is the "essence of moral sensitivity" and the "foundation of tolerance" (Newmann, 1992, p.58). In Aikido, when I am the defender, I must remain fully present, awake, calm, centered, and

responsive. I have to listen to what the attacker is doing so that I might connect and blend with that direction all the while maintaining my own balance, my own center. The difference between blending and moving with an attack versus blocking and responding with a crushing blow is stark and profound. Aikido is the practice of physical tolerance achieved by persistent effort to engage and blend with, not attack the attacker. As an Aikido defender, I must make physical space for this aggression. Like it or not, I have to respond not by crushing the attack, but by making room for it. I must choose peace over and over again. In classroom discourse, written or oral, like it or not, we have to make room for diverse points of view that may be antithetical to our own. Our goal is not to crush alternative points of view, but to hear them.

In Aikido dojos, etiquette requires that each person take turns "playing" the role of aggressor and defender. After a teacher demonstrates a move with another student, practitioners stand up and practice, usually in pairs, the move just demonstrated. Every fourth attempt the students switch roles. Thus, a senior student of twenty years training with a first time novice will take turns playing the part of aggressor and defender equally. By taking turns, we experience both what it is like to execute a technique in self-defense and receive the technique from a defender. As the attacker in Aikido, I must give my partner a concentrated attack so that they can practice, but once the partner begins the defensive move, I too must blend with the defensive move I am now receiving in order to land safely. When playing the role of attacker my intent is not only to provide a clean punch. I must also refine my ability to absorb the technique I am about to receive. As the attacker, I have to listen to the body of the defender to determine in what direction I will be thrown just as the defender had to listen to mine in order to determine how to execute

the defensive technique safely. The relationship is complex and the more advanced the training the more intense that complexity becomes. At the highest levels, after decades of training, this entire process happens in a split second because the physical sensitivity has become so refined. In both the classroom discourse and Aikido discourse "listening" is essential.

"Striving to understand different points of view" (Parker, p.20) also occurs when one is physically executing an Aikido move. Each person I train with during an hour in the dojo is very different. Strength, experience, size, tenacity, quickness, skill level, fearlessness all of these qualities differ greatly within any group of students in an Aikido dojo. Most importantly, the intent of each person can be different from day to day as well. There are days when someone may "play" the role of aggressor with unusual intensity because they have had a bad day. A new partner is an unknown. When I receive a punch from someone, I must strive to take into account all these factors as I attempt to resolve the physical disagreement without harm to either the aggressor or myself. It is critical to understand these different physical points of view in order to execute the technique successfully and respectfully, i.e. without injury to me or my partner.

The choice to respond to violent aggression without equivalent violence is fundamentally based on a commitment to slow "the rush to judgement" (Parker, p.20). In many martial arts, one studies how to counter a punch and respond with a crushing or debilitating blow to the attacker. In these instances, if a defender responds to an attacker with a still more powerful kick or punch, the judgment is quick and brutal: you have aggressed you will be hurt. In a non-deliberative class exchange between students we

might hear, "I don't agree, that's stupid". In Aikido, the response is the opposite. The emphasis is placed on joining the direction of the attack, turning and physically blending with that direction, and redirecting you and the attacker to a point of nonviolent resolution where the conflict is resolved without harm. This decision to choose peace, every time I am attacked in the dojo, is a profound training. It is not simply unthinking participation in a routine practice.

The decision to choose peace in the dojo is what students do in my classroom when they decide to disagree respectfully rather than with insults. It is much easier to learn how to block and counter punch; i.e. become a good debater who can advocate and defend points of view and insult the opponent with quick-witted barbs. It is much more difficult to learn the complex blending moves of Aikido than it is to learn how to block and punch back. Deliberation "is difficult work, of course, but so is democracy" (Parker, p.20). Indeed.

Thus, a typology to represent what is occurring might look like this:

	Ground	Connect	Blend	Resolve
Discussion	Organize your thoughts, speak clearly, do your homework!	Listen to what others have to say, ask for clarification	Seek common ground, what are points of agreement?	Is there a point we can agree upon, or at the least can we agree to disagree?
Aikido	Be centered Breathe	feel your partner, but do not collapse	move so that you are joining with the direction of your partner	find a place of mutual safety
Tenna-henko (A basic Aikido technique.)	Establish your center, stand facing your partner	The attacker grabs the wrist of the defender The attacker pushes towards the defender's center.	The defender turns in the direction of the attackers push instead of trying to push back.	Technique ends with both uke and nage looking in the same direction.

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"Tenna-henko" refers to the most basic Aikido move in which partners begin by standing across from the c The aggressor, uke, grabs the defender's (nage) wrist. Uke pushes towards nage's center. Nage must accept this pressure and not try to fight the push, but rather blend with the push and begin to turn. This decision to blend with the direction of the attack rather than push back enables both the aggressor and the defender to conclude the technique side by side, facing the same direction, rather than staring at each other in opposition.

The role of the aggressor in an Aikido encounter might also be imagined as the role of the loyal opposition in a democracy. In a democracy, the loyal opposition challenges the assumptions and the policies of the majority party. The loyal opposition challenges not with intent to destroy the democratic framework in which both operate, but with the intent of pushing the majority to explain its policies fully and completely with the ultimate goal of wining a debate/argument and regaining power. The loyalty comes from the opposition's shared commitment to the democratic process that protects all citizens' rights to express a point of view. Were the opposition not loyal, the intent would be complete destruction of the entire system, revolution. The majority party is pushed to its limits by the loyal opposition and must defend its actions in public view and prove the efficacy of its own policies.

In Aikido, the role of the aggressor is to give a good, clean honest attack. The immediate purpose of the attacker is to attack as if he/she wants to "win" the encounter. But, the intent of the attacker is not to destroy the defender, but rather to attack with such intensity and focus that the defender experiences what it would be like to respond to an attack from someone who was intent on destruction. Each attack in a dojo is a simulation

of a "real" attack. The defender is challenged to execute the Aikido technique to the best of his/her abilities. The defender must use the principles of reconciliation inherent in the actual physical Aikido technique itself. If an Aikido technique is not effective against an honest attack, then in a martial sense the technique is flawed. This is why in a black belt test, students role paying the attacker attack with full force against the defender. The student testing for black belt must be able to execute the technique safely and effectively. When training as a beginner techniques are practiced slowly. Yet, one can not progress without learning what a true attack might be like. At the black belt level, an attacker must want to win the encounter in order for the defender to refine their technique.

Similarly, if our democratic political framework does not allow, or cannot endure honest argumentation and debate we have a flawed democracy. Furthermore, in both cases, the defender/majority party is not allowed to physically destroy the attacker/loyal opposition. In both instances the majority/defender attempts to diffuse and immobilize, but not literally destroy the opposition. In Aikido, we do not block and respond with a death strike. We blend and pin, or throw, in a manner that ensures the attack is safely diffused.

The analogy with the loyal opposition may be carried to a second level. In Aikido, after an attack, the attacker must stay centered and ready to blend with the technique that the defender selects. Thus, one must attack with intensity, **but** at the moment when the defender executes the self-defense move the attacker must then blend with the direction chosen by the defender. The precise moment when this shift in control occurs varies with every encounter.

In a democracy, once the loyal opposition has challenged the majority and the majority is still able to pass its legislation, then the opposition must live with the law as passed. The opposition must "blend" with the majority. The opposition may continue to decry the new law as immoral, unwise, evil, etc., but the rules of democracy require that if the law was passed through the democratic process, then the law stands until overturned by that very same process. The loyal opposition must challenge with intensity and learn to live with the results, whatever they may be. The loyal opposition must play the role of attacker in an Aikido technique.

This personalistic reflection in which I explored the connections between Aikido and democracy/civic education led me to investigate whether other kinds of physical movement practice had ever been combined with civic education in the United States. In 1918, physical education was designed to prepare boys and girls for "the duties and responsibilities of citizenship" (*School Life*, 1918). At the time, this meant fulfilling war duties both on the battlefield and on the home front. A connection between physical education and citizenship was also emphasized by Teddy Roosevelt and again by Franklin Roosevelt during the New Deal and has continued to the present (Wong, 1998). The *1999 Annual Letter to Parents* from the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association, for example, states: "Since the late 1800's, there has been a strong link between education, citizenship, and the physical challenges that are provided through interscholastic programs" (1999, p.1). Yet, while this historical link between physical education and civic education is clear, I know of no explicit collaborations between PE teachers and Civics teachers in high school classrooms where precise physical movements have been matched with specific discourse skills for the purpose of teaching

for democracy. Even where Aikido has been introduced into the school setting (Edelman, 1994) it has been for the purposes of achieving better self-control and mutual respect among students, not explicitly to teach skills of democratic discourse. The best example so far discovered is Professor Levine's course at the University of Chicago entitled "Conflict Theory and Aikido" in which he includes the teaching of Aikido in the course (Levine, 1992). Further research may well enable me to find such teaching at the high school level. Meanwhile, could I do it in my classroom?

As I practiced and studied Aikido, a recurring moment also convinced me that introducing Aikido might help my students understand the meaning of democratic discourse. Again, using Ellis and Bochner's (1999) method of "systematic sociological introspection and emotional recall" (p.737), I constructed the following description of a moment that has occurred constantly in my Aikido training.

> I am attempting to absorb the steady pressure of another person on my wrist without collapsing my arm and without keeping my arm rigid. Instructors say we should feel like a fire hose full of water. Be strong but flexible, stay relaxed, but don't collapse. As I attempt to absorb without collapsing and turn my hips to allow my partner's energy to go by, Sarah, our head instructor, walks up to me and says again, patiently, do not lean forward so much, stand up straight, open your heart. How can your heart be open when you are leaning forward, shoulders bunched in? How can you allow your partner to enter when you have already filled the space between you with your own head and shoulders? You are off balance in that position. Open your heart, stand up straight.

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What Sarah has told me in the dojo dozens of times I have said to myself and to my students many times in class regarding discussion. If you fill the classroom with your own voice how can you hear others? If you do not have confidence to believe that you do have a voice how can others hear you? Open your heart and mind to the possibilities of another's experience. What I needed to do on the Aikido mat I needed to do in the classroom. What my students needed to do to perform the most basic Aikido technique they also needed to do in a class discussion.

Part Three: Combining Personalistic and Deliberative Reflection at the High School

By the fall of 2000, I was teaching a course entitled Citizenship and World Affairs at my high school in which Aikido was a daily part of the curriculum. My personalistic reflection had been combined with my deliberative reflection so that students might have the opportunity to improve their skills of civic discourse through a combination of seatwork (readings, essays, discussions, deliberations, presentations) and footwork (Aikido). By the ninth week of the course students were beginning to make connections. The following excerpt from the Journal I kept that fall describes one such moment. As this excerpt represents the results of combining personalistic and deliberative reflections, the excerpt is presented in the font used earlier for personalistic reflections and in italics to represent the addition of deliberative reflections.

> Personal Journal, Citizenship and World Affairs,
> Fall Semester 2000, 11/07 **Day 28**
> *I showed five minutes from a video of thirty-year Aikido veteran Mary Heiny doing Aikido and talking about the philosophy behind the moves. I then showed the video of students doing the Aikido moves I filmed last week. I asked*

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students to reflect on what was happening. At first Robin, for example, had a hard time expressing what was going on with her movement with Charles, but the class slowly started to formulate responses.

They began to make connections between grounding their bodies as the first step in the Aikido move with being clear in your point of view in a discussion. Connect meant both the physical grasp of someone's hand on your wrist and listening to different points of view. Blending was moving physically in harmony and looking for areas of common ground in a discussion. Resolution was ending the technique safely or agreeing to disagree, or making a compromise or coming to a decision in class.

Paul (Assistant Principal who was present in class on an unscheduled observation) also made the comment about a technique Mary Heiny demonstrated in the video and the nature of connection and listening in dialogue. He saw ideals of democratic discourse in the movement - begin in opposition and end up in harmony. If he can see it in one class others might also be able to imagine the possibilities.

The combination of personalistic and deliberative reflection had enabled this moment to occur. Students were referring their "own action to that of others" as Dewey (1916, p.101) said we should be doing and this referring was occurring both physically in the Aikido move and in the classroom discourse itself. In the physical Aikido technique students had "to consider the action of others to give point and direction" (Dewey, 1916, p.101) to their own move. When they were defenders they had to respond to the aggressor and move in a direction initiated by the aggressor. Yet, when they were aggressors and the technique began, the point of reference for the aggressor changed from

being him/herself to the defender, who was now directing the technique itself. In this very discussion in which we analyzed the video, students were attempting to make new meaning out of their experience by listening to one another.

Throughout the semester, I encouraged students to discus the possible strengths and weaknesses of the Aikido-civics connection in presentations, essays and class discussions. I told them this connection was something that was still new for me and, in the interest of argumentation and debate, I was looking for their feedback and challenges. There was one day in class when a particular student was able to present the best challenge I had encountered regarding the legitimacy of my Aikido-as-Civic-discourse connection. He presented his essay to the class and the discussion that ensued exemplified what I was trying to achieve in the course. As he presented his challenge and other students responded, I sat silently at my keyboard noting the context of their ideas as well as their conversation.

> Personal Journal, Citizenship and World Affairs,
> Fall Semester, **Day 44** 12/04/2000
> *Adam's challenge - Aikido is a system of self defenses not a method of deliberation or discourse. It is "weaving out of the way" of conflict and nothing else, people are dodging the situation instead of engaging the conflict and looking to solve things. Democracy depends on argumentation as we read in Madison's Federalist #10. In Aikido, according to Gleason (1997), conflict and competition is bad and, in fact, in the purest sense, you should not think of defending yourself at all, only blending - the ultimate goal is no conflict. But, in a democracy protecting your own point of view is sometimes necessary. We defend our points of view and at times we may compete. If argumentation and debate are essential to democracy but bad*

in Aikido how can you say Aikido is a good model of democratic discourse?

Brian - Aikido is the physical representation of tolerance. You are always going to find people with opposing viewpoints, Aikido enables you to focus and approach the problem in a very tolerant manner - you can still turn it around and stay grounded. It relates through toleration.

Jim - instead of taking on the conflict directly Aikido shows you how to connect to it and/or nullify the threat - do not take it on directly, like Brian said, it is not really because you are giving in. You can agree to disagree.

Adam - but you can not just dodge a point of view. If you collapse there is not the result you want. In Aikido one person is controlling the interaction, it is not really true that you are equals. Is there really a "discussion"? ...Are you really listening and learning from the other person in an Aikido move? Aren't you just avoiding conflict, isn't that different?

Lianne - I don't think one partner dominates. I see at as both people practicing how to move together. No one has to dominate. You sound like you are dominating in conversations.

Ethel - both sides want their solution to be the one for the problem, in Aikido there is no one answer, there is no one solution, you have to find a place you can both move to without struggle.

Carla - my understanding of the ideal discussion is not so much two people butting heads as a sharing and blending of

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ideas which in Aikido is a sharing and blending of energies. Interpretation is pretty personal, there are a lot of personal responses to this, I think the connection between Aikido and discussion is a personal thing. Aikido is the physical expression of the perfect discussion, for others it may be different.

Adam - I don't think so.

Adam's challenge was excellent and forced me to re-examine my assumptions about the legitimacy of the connection that I was trying to draw. Was there a problem? There were some teachers of Aikido who also believed that one should ultimately strive for a state of being in which there was no Other, where any distinction between a defender and aggressor were irrelevant because you were both of the same ultimate energy source. How did this ideal mesh with the fact that in a vibrant democracy argumentation and debate is essential?

Several weeks later, I spoke with another student, Doug, after school. Doug said that he believed Adam had made the mistake of confusing the ideal with the useful. Doug was a student of Karate and had been intrigued with the Aikido we had been doing in class. Doug said just because Gleason (1997) and some others might give us an ideal form of Aikido to which we should aspire that may theoretically be in conflict with the ideal democracy, does not mean that the practice of Aikido is not useful. Doug argued that practicing Aikido techniques was a good way of learning what it means to disagree peacefully. The goal of an Aikido move is to find a place of mutual toleration just like Walzer (*On Toleration*, 1997) talked about. At the least, Doug said, we may just be putting up with somebody else. Yet, we learn how to gain the confidence not to fear

disagreement and thereby learn to listen a little better. At best, we develop compassion and confidence.

Doug said only "one in a million" ever commit their lives to the study of a martial art such that they might truly reach the ideal that Gleason (1997) was writing about where there ceases to be an opponent because you are in perfect harmony with the universe and thus all things, "whatever that means". Gleason may believe that the Aikido ideal is ultimate physical, spiritual energetic unity. But, meanwhile, Doug said, all the rest of us could benefit from practicing something that deepens our understanding of the peaceful resolution of conflict. Aikido, he said, was a great way to study conflict resolution and think more deeply about democracy generally and what happens in a class discussion specifically. Aikido was an example of physical discourse and as such was useful.

Part Four: Implications. So What?

1. Aikido as Civic Education

Levine's (1989, 1990) work enabled me to place the martial arts generally, and Aikido specifically, within the larger framework of the liberal arts. By drawing upon the work of writers and researchers involved in education for democracy, this paper extended Levine's work by suggesting that Aikido might be placed even more specifically into the arena of civic education. Dewey's (1916) notion of associated living was presented as the kind of civic education we should be aiming for. The skills necessary for this associated living are built by teaching skills of democratic discourse (Cherryholmes, 1980; Newmann, 1992; Newmann, Marks and Gamoran, 1996). The deliberative arts (Parker,

1998) were examined as one type of discourse skill that might be specifically taught with Aikido.

By organizing an elective course entitled Citizenship and World Affairs that explicitly combined the teaching of Aikido with traditional classroom based activities, I attempted to probe this Aikido as Civics connection. This paper is the first report on that attempt. The response from students has been extremely positive. Research now in progress will report more fully on the students' experiences of the course and the meaning that each one made regarding the Aikido as civics connection.

Many questions have also emerged from this notion that teaching for democracy might be strengthened by including Aikido:

1. Do most practitioners of Aikido see themselves as practicing a skill that improves their civic skills? If civic education was occurring in Aikido dojos this would be a rich source of study and investigation. Can civic educators learn from Aikido practitioners?

2. Do most teachers of Aikido make connections between Aikido and civic skills? Do Aikido teachers generally conceptualize their task as one of creating better citizens or do they see their task as simply developing skilled martial artists? Could Aikido teachers inform civics teachers about teaching for democracy?

3. Since Aikido originated in Japan it may also be useful to investigate whether any Aikido applications are made in schools. Are martial arts and Aikido in particular, a common PE option in Japan? Why? Are connections to civic education made?

4. Preliminary research examining physical education in Germany (Pfister, 1997) and China (Brownwell, 1995) has found that there are historical antecedents for using the body in the teaching of a political ideology. What might further investigation reveal? What do we already know about combining the teaching of physical movement and political education that might enhance teaching for democracy?

Investigating questions such as these may lead to a deepening understanding of the potential to combine civic education with Aikido.

2. Reflective Practice

Valli's (1997) typology of reflective practice enabled me to conceptualize how to make use of both research findings and my own inner voice in the formation of a new social studies elective at the high school where I teach. As one teacher's attempt to put theory into practice it affirms Valli's work in particular and reflective practice generally.

This paper also fits into the larger arena of teacher research broadly defined "as systematic, intentional, and self critical inquiry about one's work" (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1999, p.22). Cochran-Smith and Lytle argue that one of the great strengths of the teacher research movement is its empowerment of teachers.

> In its broadest sense, the emphasis of the movement is on teacher as knower and as agent for change, a perspective that resonates with many of the agendas and affirms a commitment deeply felt by many who are involved in the educational enterprise" (1999, p.22).

As a classroom teacher such sentiments resonate loudly indeed. Theoretical frameworks such as reflective practice enable practitioners to more carefully consider how to develop and implement pedagogy in which our own voice can be merged with research to create rigorous, creative opportunities for our students. The opportunity to incorporate a personal practice, such as Aikido, into my attempts to help students develop a deeper understanding of democratic discourse energizes my teaching in every class. By creating a School Board approved elective that was my own creation, I was able to freely explore how I might incorporate a new dimension into my teaching.

By presenting Citizenship and World Affairs as a work in progress to my students, I invited them to engage in critical thinking and analysis considered so essential to democratic education (Dewey, 1916; Newmann, 1992; Parker 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001). Allowing my students to critique the results of my reflective practice, namely the course curriculum itself, deepened my understanding of the Aikido-as-civic-education connection. Hence, reflective practice may provide a unique opportunity for student involvement in curriculum development should we choose to allow them the opportunity to look behind the curtain. This is one way in which reflective practice might become a powerful tool for Constructivist educators. If we really want to empower students as equal partners in education, why not let them critique our efforts? Why not ask them to help us develop the curriculum itself?

My own experience suggests that providing teachers the opportunity to engage in deliberative and personalistic reflection, for the purpose of invigorating their own practice, may prove fruitful for both students and teachers. How could teachers be supported to develop and report on the results of their own efforts? What role could

Colleges of Education play in supporting teachers to become part of the research community? How could the AERA annual meeting continue to support the work of classroom educators who are trying to put theory into practice?

The limitations of the study, i.e. one class, of one teacher, in one high school obviously limit the ability to generalize the findings. Yet, where else does one start except where one is? Reporting on one attempt to use reflective practice to combine research findings with one's own inner voice, for the purpose of teaching for democracy, adds to the growing body of teacher research. As teachers continue to report their own research findings the discourse between and among theorists, researchers and practitioners is deepened. A deepened discourse benefits all of us. Furthermore, my own understanding of what to teach and why has been greatly informed by engaging in this research. Offering teachers opportunities to engage in reflective practice may deepen their understanding of their own pedagogy.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) ask how participants in the teacher research movement will "define and justify appropriate outcomes of inquiry based teacher education and professional development?" (p.22). In this paper, I have attempted to define and justify why I engaged in reflective practice and what the outcomes have been regarding the development of the course itself. My hope is that by doing so, I have added to our understanding of teaching for democracy and encouraged other educators, at whatever level, to explore how their own inner voice might do the same.

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